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ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand how executive committee members and deans experience and perceive the process of governance within their institutions. Following a brief review of the literature, the paper reviews three models of academic governance: the academic bureaucracy, the political institution, and the collegium and discusses previous governance studies at the University of Michigan. Following, this study explores the range of governance structures and processes employed at the University of Michigan. Within-case and cross-case analyses of interviews conducted with faculty executive committee members (two at each school or college) developed 12 dimensions of governance, which were used to explore processes such as elections, agenda creation, planning, promotion and tenure decisions, and communication across various campus units. The study found that faculty authority among the campus units varies substantially; that governing faculty tend to receive only partial information about the election of executive committee representatives; that while many executive committee members are active in creating meeting agendas and in general planning, they have marginal roles in budget decisions, curricular planning, and merit pay decisions; and that executive committees tend to have considerable influence over tenure and promotion decisions and also exercise authority over other committees within their campus units. (Contains 26 references.) (CH)

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Title: **Understanding Faculty Executive Committees at the University of Michigan**

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(The authors would like to recognize the contributions of Charlotte Briggs and Michael Metzger. These individuals conducted interviews and analyzed some of the data collected during this study.)

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This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of AIR Forum Papers.

Dolores Vura
Editor
AIR Forum Publications

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ABSTRACT

During the Fall of 1996, representatives of the University of Michigan chapter of the American Association of University Professors and the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs at the University of Michigan expressed an interest in conducting a follow-up study to investigate the perceptions and experiences of faculty executive committee members at the University of Michigan. The executive committees are authorized by the University of Michigan Board of Regents to create and to evaluate educational policy within their respective schools and colleges (a.k.a. campus units). The authors collaborated with the AAUP and SACUA to create a questionnaire protocol, parameters for the study, and a project budget.

The purpose of the this study is to understand how executive committee members and deans experience and perceive the process of governance within their respective schools and colleges. This study describes the range of governance structures and processes, which are utilized at the University. The investigators found that faculty authority among the campus units varies substantial. The governing faculty tend to receive only partial information about the election of representatives to the executive committee. Many executive committees play an active role in the creation of the meeting agenda and general planning, but they have marginal participation in budgetary decisions, curricular planning, and annual merit pay decisions. Executive committees tend to have considerable influence over tenure and promotion decisions. Furthermore, the executive committee tends to exercise authority over other committees within their campus units.

INTRODUCTION

Research universities represent the epitome of institutional autonomy, complexity, and innovation in the academic world. Through their control of research journals, grant competitions, and the structure and process of federal research programs, research universities have been able to exercise considerable influence throughout all sectors of higher education. Many factors have contributed to the success of the modern research university. Federal and state support for flagship research institutions, outstanding scholarship, support for academic and professional journals, and numerous inventions and discoveries have all contributed to the rise of research universities. The local university governance structure provides the context through which many university activities are coordinated and rewarded.

Most faculty at a large research institutions do not interact directly with academic bureaucrats. They are unlikely to see the university president, provost, trustees, regents, or representatives from the faculty senate or American Association of University Professors in the course of their normal routines. At a large research university central administration is often a distance and enigmatic force which rarely directly affects the lives of faculty. Faculty are more likely to be interested in their local governance structure (e.g., standing committees in the College of Engineering) because it is through this regime that they essentially receive their tenure and promotions, and merit pay. Furthermore, the local governance structure also allocates important resources and teaching assignments

During the Fall of 1996, representatives of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors and the Senate Advisory Committee on University

Affairs at the University of Michigan expressed an interest in conducting a study of the perceptions and experiences of faculty executive committee members at the University of Michigan. Executive committees are authorized by the University of Michigan Board of Regents to create and to evaluate educational policy within their respective schools and colleges. Joseph M. Fenty and Professor Marvin Peterson, of the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, met with representatives of the AAUP and SACUA to create a questionnaire protocol and other parameters for the study. Throughout this study the investigators received the financial support and endorsements from the AAUP and SACUA.

Many higher education scholars have suggested ways that might help us understand what makes postsecondary institutions unique among organizations, and how models of governance may help us make sense of decision-making at research universities. The following literature review will briefly survey the characteristics of academic organizations and the major models of decision-making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Characteristics of Academic Organizations

Many scholars of higher education have argued that postsecondary institutions are unique examples of social organizations. Models of management, decision-making, and performance that are salient in industry, non-profit firms, and the military do not adequately describe higher education. Baldridge et al. (1991) posited that academic organizations are different from other organizations because they uniquely affected by goal ambiguity, client service, problematic technology, professionalism, and environmental vulnerability. Most organizations have missions, goals, and objectives

which are clear and form the basis of plans and performance evaluation; however, universities have multiple constituencies which often have competing ideas about how the institution should function and what goals it ought to pursued. Because constituents have unique needs and influence, postsecondary institution have created various niches and governance frameworks to serve constituents' concerns and needs.

Corson (1960) argued that postsecondary institutions have dual controls which coordinate administrative and professional hierarchies. Birnbaum (1988) concluded that "administrative authority is predicated on the control and coordination of activities by superiors; professional authority is predicted on autonomy and individual knowledge (p. 10)." Baldridge et al. (1991) reported that the salient features of professionalism include autonomous work, divided loyalties, tensions between professional and bureaucratic values, and demands for peer evaluation. Research universities have highly developed forms of professional authority among institutions of higher education. These universities have strong professional cultures which give individual faculty members substantial latitude over their research, teaching, and service activities

Cohen and March (1974) described large research universities as "organized anarchy." At postsecondary institutions that have abundant resources and multiple missions, individual faculty members tend to have substantive latitude to design their work with minimal interference from administrators. Faculty organize most of their activities without consulting the institutional mission or their academic department.

Models of Academic Governance

The most popular models of academic governance include the academic bureaucracy, the political institution, and the collegium. The academic bureaucracy has

deep roots in organizational theory (Weber, 1947). Baldridge at al. (1991) summarized the following salient characteristics of an academic bureaucracy: postsecondary institutions have state charters, formal hierarchies, formal channels of communications, elaborate policies and procedures, potent authority relationships, and complex decision-making processes. Baldridge et al. (1971) proposed that university governance can also operate as a political system. This model of governance focuses on interest group dynamics, conflicts, and policy-making. This political model assumes that administrators are the primary policy making agents, constituents participate in the policy-making process, constituents coalesce into powerful interest groups, interest groups engage in strategies that bring them into conflict, and internal and external interest groups limit the ability of administrators control their institutions through bureaucratic controls. Finally, the collegium is often referred to as the utopian model of academic governance. Birnbaum (1988) stated that in a collegial system the "emphasis [is] on consensus, shared power [between faculty and administrators], common commitments and aspirations, and leadership that emphasizes consultation, and collective responsibilities . . . (p. 87)." Under the collegial system, administration is "understood to be subordinate to the collegium and carries out the collegium's will. Administrators are often members of the faculty who agree to serve for a limited time and then return to their classroom responsibilities. Administrators therefore tend to be "amateurs," rather than professionals (p. 89)."

The collegial model, political model and bureaucracy model are all abstract notions of academic governance. None of the models exist in a pure form. At a research university all forms will be present concurrently, but they will be evident in

different strengths. At a research university it is likely that the political and bureaucratic models will play dominant roles in an institutional setting that resembles an "organized anarchy." These models of governance fail to account for the affects of the postsecondary ecology. Alpert (1991) developed a model that integrated the interaction of the campus and disciplinary community.

Alpert (1991) posited that departments at a research university have become essentially autonomous units. Academic departments have become "the key unit of academic life" because it is through them that university accumulates the prestige, power, and resources. The emergence of the department has been concurrent with the increased power of individual faculty. Decentralized systems of governance have provided academic departments with the leverage they need to define and to evaluate teaching, research, and service. Alpert argued that the dominance of academic departments has lead to the atrophy of university governance. To examine governance at a research university, Alpert developed a Matrix Model. The Matrix Model maps the relationships between research universities, disciplines, departments, external agencies, and internal cross-disciplinary research units. Commenting on the affect disciplinary communities on academic departments, Alpert reported

> The shift in emphasis from teaching to research as the primary [postsecondary] institutional goal was accompanied by a related but different organizational change— a change which Jencks and Riesman (1968) refer to as "the academic revolution" — the transfer of authority in academic matters from the president to the faculty. The emergence of the disciplinary communities as the arbiters of institutional life corresponds to the takeover by the professoriate of the dominant role in the governance of the university. This shift was accelerated by the entry of the federal government as a major source of funds allocated directly to individual researchers and handled by their departments. A principal consequence of the enlargement of the federal role was to hasten the decentralization of

> the individual university; the various departments became more independent of the internal administration and more dependent on the support of external constituencies.

As the research university has grown in complexity, its governance structure has evolved to allow the faculty to exercise substantive control and evaluation of their work. Birnbaum (1988) argued that,

> As faculty become more specialized, they assert their expertise as a requirement for designing curriculum and assessing the qualifications of colleagues. Particularly in larger and more complex institutions, schools or departments become the locus of decision-making, sometimes reinforced by an "every tub on its own bottom" management philosophy that makes these subunits responsible for their own enrollment and financial affairs as well. In such cases, the larger institutions [e.g., research universities] may become an academic holding company, presiding over a federation of quasi-autonomous subunits. Unable to influence the larger institution, faculty retreat into the small subunit for which they feel affinity and from which they can defend their influence and status (p.17).

The current study investigated how the quasi-autonomous campus units (i.e., school and colleges) at a large research university decide important governance issues.

Governance structures in the schools and colleges of major research universities play an important role in the affairs of the university. Decisions about admissions, curricula, hiring, promotion, and tenure often occur at this level at most research universities. These campus units play an important role in the life of the institution, but they have not been adequately studied by higher education scholars. Studies of postsecondary governance have focused on the affairs of collective bargaining units and faculty senates (Nelson, 1982; Schaefer, 1987; Yellowitz, 1987). The most recent research activity has taken the form of surveys or case studies involving college presidents and faculty senate chairs (Gilmour,1991; Lee, 1991). The current study will

explore the functions of executive committees in the campus units at the University of Michigan.

What is faculty governance?

Faculty governance refers to the formal arrangements by which faculty and others participate in the structures and processes of decision-making within a college or university, about purposes, policies, programs, and procedures (Millet, 1993). These formal arrangements typically involve standing committees such as the faculty senate or faculty executive committee that serve both manifest and latent functions at various levels within the college or university hierarchy (Birnbaum, 1991). The manifest functions fulfilled by governance committees include oversight of promotions, appointments, curricula changes, and academic program development or discontinuance. Latent functions, on the other hand, include status provider, attention cue, organizational conservator, and ritual.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Previous Governance Study at the University of Michigan

During the fall of 1995, at the encouragement of the University of Michigan AAUP chapter, a study to investigate the structure, membership, purview, and authority of the faculty executive committees was undertaken. This study, called Democracy and Authority: Faculty Executive Committees at the University of Michigan (Keyek-Franssen & Ferguson, 1996), compared the Regents' Bylaws and school/college bylaws in the context of campus unit governance. This report found the Regents' Bylaws were ambiguous about "with whom authority resides (pg. 1)." The Regents' Bylaws seem to invest similar power in the governing faculty, deans, and the executive committee.

Furthermore, these investigators discovered that campus unit bylaws which addressed governance differ substantially in character and scope. To compliment the Democracy and Authority Study (DAS), the current study will describe campus unit governance in the context of Regents' Bylaws. Where appropriate, governance themes will be identified to help the academic community to understand governance at the level of schools and colleges.

Importance and Timeliness of the Study

At many research university faculty are concern that large administrative bureaucracies have diminished their ability to make important decisions which affect their campus units and the institution. Presidential management styles that emphasize corporate values and efficiencies evoke substantial anxiety and concern among faculty governance leaders. These conditions have created the impetus for the study. The AAUP and SACUA intend that that this study describe the scope and intensity of faculty participation in governance at the University of Michigan. The study findings will be used to generate dialogue among the administrative and academic communities to improve faculty participation in governance.

This investigation also found that most of the faculty, who serve on the executive committees in the 15 school and colleges examined during this investigation, indicated that studying the role of the executive committee was important. Many of the issues identified in this study were the source of on-going dialogue within the executive committees.

Regents' Bylaws

Regent bylaws that address college and school governance are touchstones of

uncertainty and quandary (Keyek-Franssen & Ferguson, 1996). Like a politician that makes the same promise to different interest groups that are struggling for the same piece of turf, the Regents' Bylaw invest similar power and authority in the governing faculty, the executive committee, and the dean. For example, Regent Bylaw 5.02 indicates that the governing faculty "shall be in charge of the affairs of the school [or] college." However this Regent Bylaw contains the caveat that the governing faculty can not exceed the powers of the executive committee.

According to Regent Bylaw 5.03, the faculty are "vested with *plenary powers* to make rules and regulation," however, Regents' Bylaw 5.06 makes the dean the "executive officer." If the faculty have plenary powers, what powers are left for the executive officer? Finally, Regents' Bylaw 5.06 charges the executive committee with "investing and formulating educational and instructional policies for consideration by the faculty." And the executive committee is given the power to act in "matters of budgets, promotions, and appointments" and to assist with "administrative functions." The Regent Bylaws above can be used to defend very different constellations of power and authority among the governing faculty, the executive committee, and the dean. The current study attempts to describe how the governing faculty, the deans, and the executive committee have tried to come to terms with the contradictions about power and authority embedded in the Regents' Bylaws.

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of the Faculty Governance Study (FGS) is to understand how faculty executive committee members and deans experience and perceive the process of governance within their respective schools and colleges in the context of the unit and

regental bylaws. This study will describe the range of governance structures and processes which are employed at the University of Michigan. My descriptive study will tell the story of governance without evaluating the worth and merit of the governance structures and practices. The responsibility for valuing the governance should rest with the university community.

Case Study Approach

The FGS team conducted a series of case studies of particular schools or colleges. Interviews were conducted with a sample of faculty executive committee members and the dean (or the dean's representative) of each school or college (see the Appendix for details about the study protocol). The subjects for this study were chosen based on their faculty executive committee membership. The names of all current faculty executive committee members were provided by the appropriate deans. From this list I selected subjects who have at least 2 years of experience serving on the faculty executive committees. For each school or colleges I conducted three interviews: two interviews with faculty members and one with the dean or associate dean. When permissible, the interviews were taped and transcribed. If additional information or clarification was needed, I asked the subjects to participate in follow-up telephone interviews.

My study is bounded by the purposeful selection of the colleges and schools at the University of Michigan. Each of these units have unique histories, cultures, resources, and governance structures and processes. Nevertheless, they are all subject to regental and central administration governance. Thus, these circumstances make it possible to study these units individually and collective to examine the form and function

of academic governance. Using the procedures for case studies articulated by Creswell (1997), I conducted within-case and cross-case analysis. The within-case analysis involved generating a rich in-depth description of the school context, governance structure and processes, and themes. The cross-case analysis allowed us to search for themes across cases. To summarize the salient findings in my study, I developed dimensions of governance. These 12 dimensions allowed us to explore governance processes such as elections, agenda creation, planning, promotion and tenure decisions, and communication across the various campus units. Finally, I end the paper with interpretations and assertions derived from the case results.

RESULTS

The interview data was analyzed using twelve dimensions of governance. Each dimension has a scale to capture the diversity governance processes. Table 1 contains the dimensions of governance and the distribution of campus units (identified by letters). In the following sections we explore each dimension and the dominant patterns of governance which emerge.

Selection Guidance (Nominations for Executive Committee Elections)

Keyek-Franssen and Ferguson (1996) found that the nomination and elections process was described in great detail in the campus units' bylaws. The general procedure called for faculty to vote and submit a list of nominees to the provost. The provost, acting on behalf of the president, select a nominee. In the last step, the nominee is appointed to the executive committee by the Regents. Keyek- Franssen and Ferguson posited that the election/nomination process is of "utmost importance in determining the relative democracy of the executive committee (p. 16)."

Table 1
Broad Dimension Matrix

Dimensions																		
	CAMPUS UNITS:			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Election Guidance		n	%															
	High	7	47%		x	x	x		x	x		x		x				
	Medium	1	7%													x		
	Low	7	47%	x				x			x		x		x		x	x
Election Results																		
	Full Disclosure	1	7%		x													
	Partial Disclosure	6	40%			x		x	x			x				x		x
	Disclosure of Appointments Only	8	53%	x			x			x	x		x	x	x		x	
Development of Meeting Agenda																		
	High	10	67%	x			x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x
	Medium	1	7%							x								
	Low	4	27%		x	x						x			x			
Participation in Budgeting Decisions																		
	High	2	13%					x										x
	Medium	5	33%	x								x	x	x			x	
	Low	8	53%		x	x	x		x	x	x				x	x		
Participation in Campus Planning																		
	High	7	47%					x					x	x	x	x	x	x
	Medium	4	27%		x		x		x	x								
	Low	4	27%	x		x					x	x						

Table 1
Broad Dimension Matrix

Dimensions																		
	CAMPUS UNITS:			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Participation in Academic Planning																		
	High	3	20%						x								x	x	
	Medium	3	20%							x				x				x
	Low	9	60%	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x			
Tenure																		
	Substantive Control	2	13%					x	x									
	Advisory to the Dean	4	27%		x	x						x						x
	Tightly Coupled to the Tenure Committee	7	47%	x			x			x	x			x	x	x		
	No Role	2	13%										x				x	
Promotion																		
	Substantive Control	8	53%				x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		
	Advisory to the Governing Faculty	1	7%														x	
	Advisory to the Dean	5	33%	x	x	x								x				x
	No Role	1	7%										x					
Annual Merit Pay Decisions																		
	Substantive Control	1	7%															x
	Advisory to Dean	4	27%	x	x	x						x						
	No Role	10	67%				x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Tenure Track Appointments																		
	Substantive Control	10	67%				x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
	Advisory to the Governing Faculty	2	13%										x				x	
	Advisory to the Dean	2	13%	x	x													
	No Role	1	7%			x												

Table 1
Broad Dimension Matrix

Dimensions																			
	CAMPUS UNITS:			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Relationship Between the Executive Committee and Key Committees in the Campus Unit																			
	Tight Coupling	10	67%	x	x		x	x				x	x	x		x	x	x
	Medium Coupling	4	27%						x	x	x				x				
	Loose Coupling	1	7%			x													
Communication of Information from Executive Committee to Governing Faculty																			
	Comprehensive Duplex	5	33%							x			x	x	x			x	
	Informal Communicator	5	33%	x	x				x							x	x		
	Formal Communicator	4	27%				x	x			x	x							
	Limited Communicator	1	7%			x													

Keyek-Franssen and Ferguson examined the bylaws for information about membership criteria for the executive committee. These investigators found that executive committees could be grouped into four categories: no specification (25%), rank specified (37.5%), rank balance specified (12.5%), and program or concentration balance specified (25%). Thus, Keyek-Franssen and Ferguson found three-quarters of the campus units have specific guidance about some form of representation on the committee.

The current study looked at guidance in the form of committees to assist with the nomination process. This study found the distribution of campus units on the guidance dimension tends to be bimodal (see Table 1). Campus units tend to either be high or low on this dimension. Half of the units have active nomination committees which are charged with generating a slate of nominees for positions on the executive committee. The other half of the campus units do not rely on a nomination committee. These units use a roster of eligible faculty to generate nominees or elect faculty. One campus unit departs from these methods, this unit does not depend on a nomination committee to conduct the election. Instead this unit uses the executive committee and the dean's advisory committee to create a slate of nominees. Regardless of the method used to generate nominees or elect faculty, each unit manages to construct a slate of nominees and conduct elections on schedule.

Nicholas Steneck (1991) posited that faculty do not fully participate in postsecondary governance. He found that as few as one in ten actually became involved in faculty governance. Factors that have encouraged faculty apathy include reward systems which essentially ignore participation in governance, complex

administrative tasks which have encouraged the emergence of professional managerial staff, isolated disciplinary and professional community which has lead to a diminished sense of community among faculty, fewer full-time faculty which has lead to greater control by deans and department heads, and dysfunctional faculty senates which has encouraged overreaching presidents and administrators (Kerr, 1994; Leatherman, 1998; Steneck, 1991). Given the poor environment for governance, it is not surprising that about half of the campus units use various committees (i.e., nomination committee, executive committee) to create a slate of faculty nominees. Committee members can make personal appeals which may influence well respected faculty to serve on the executive committee.

Selection-- Dissemination of Election Information

This investigation found that campus units vary regarding the amount of information faculty receive about the executive committee elections. Faculty receive election information, but rarely is it complete. More than half of the campus units, receive no information about the election results (see Table 1). The faculty in these units are informed by the dean, after the Board of Regents have approved the appointments, regarding which faculty members will serve on the executive committee. Forty percent of the campus units receive information about the top vote-getters after the elections are completed. In only one case do the governing faculty receive complete information about the election. As in elections for governmental offices, these faculty receive the names of top vote-getters and the vote counts.

Creation of Meeting Agenda Items

The regental bylaws makes the dean the ex-officio chair of the executive

committee. In general, the dean manages the executive committee meetings by supervising the introduction of agenda items and the duration of discussions on any particular issue. Nevertheless, the degree to which faculty member participate in agenda setting varies. Sixty-seven percent of the campus units reported that faculty play an active role in the creation of the executive committee's agenda (see Table 1). The source of agenda items varies among campus units. In one case, the dean sends out the agenda to the executive committee members prior to the meeting so they can have the opportunity to add items to the agenda. In another case, items for the agenda are solicited from the general faculty at the beginning of the semester. These items are discussed by the executive committee throughout the academic year. More that a quarter of the faculty have little input into the development of the meeting agenda. These executive committee members rarely participate in the creation of the executive committee agenda. In these campus units the dean takes a strong hand in the development and management of the agenda.

Participation in Curricular Planning

Curricular planning refers to policies, procedures, and committees designed to manage the curriculum. The extent to which executive committee members participate in academic planning varies widely. The data indicates 60% of the executive committees play a marginal role in curricular matters (see Table 1) In many of these campus units the dean (and his or her staff) and/ or the standing curriculum committee are the dominant agents of curriculum change. These findings appear to be consistent with the status of teaching at research universities (Boyer Commission, 1998). Management of the curriculum, from the perspective of most executive committees,

does not warrant coordination and control at the highest level within the campus unit.

In some campus units of this type, curricular decisions are made at the department or program level. The remain campus units are evenly split between high (20%) and medium (20%) levels of participation in academic planning.

Participation in Campus Unit Planning

For the purpose of this study, campus unit planning refers to the formal and informal activities which are designed to help the campus units articulate mission, goals, policies, procedures, and positions. Planning activities may result in documents which contains timetables and implementation protocols. In other cases, planning may involve the creation of conceptual understandings which are not codified.

Our definition of planning was loosely constructed to allow the subjects to freely reflect on planning activities. Many of the faculty and deans we interviewed were at least marginally hostile to the idea of strategic planning. Some associated strategic with the ideas of a past president or provost. Our study seems to support the positions outlined by Kotler and Murphy (1991). They posited that,

> Most colleges and universities are not set up with a strategic planning capacity. They are basically good at *operations*, that is efficiently doing the same things day after day. Patterns of operation were traditionally established to meet the environmental conditions and opportunities; the schools' manner of conducting their affairs are likely to persist long after these procedures have lost their effectiveness in new environments.
>
> Organizational leaders-- boards, major administrators, and faculty representatives-- are the only ones who can modify organizations through time as the environment change. Yet few collegiate leaders are able and willing to focus systemically on change. They are largely taken up in today's operations and results. Making changes in the goals, strategies, and organizational systems usually occur as reactions to crisis events rather than as thoughtful adaptations in advance of crises.

Nearly half of the campus units had high levels of some general planning activity (see Table 1). These executive committees take an active role in the development of strategic direction or a strategic plan. Activities that are associated with some of these campus units include: faculty retreats, dialogue about campus unit investment options, and some formal strategic planning.

Participation in Budgeting Decisions/Priorities

This dimension describes the level of faculty participation in the development of the campus unit budget. Keyek-Franssen and Ferguson (1996) claimed that the campus unit bylaws are "silent" about the budgetary authority of the executive committee. The current study found that more that half of the executive committee member have low or no participation in the budgetary matters (see Table 1). In these campus units the executive committee rarely discusses budgetary issues. Specific discussions of budgetary policy or plans, when they occur, are lead by the dean or the financial officer to brief the executive committee. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the budget is not considered by the executive committee. The executive committee does not develop budgetary priorities or approve of the non-discretionary budget. Low levels of faculty participation in the budgeting process is not unique to the University of Michigan (Dimond, 1991).

Tenure Decisions

The tenure policies and procedures vary substantial among the campus units. Disciplinary traditions, norms, and unique governance structure shape the process by which campus units decide tenure cases.

During the course of this study members of the executive committee were asked

to comment on the degree to which the committee participates in the tenure review process. Committee participation can be divided into four categories: Substantive Control, Advisory to the Dean, Tightly Coupled to the Tenure Committee, and No Role. Nearly half of the executive committees can be group into Tightly Coupled to the Tenure Committee category (see Table 1). This category describes executive committees that work closely with a campus unit tenure committee charged with reviewing tenure cases. The tenure committee typically reviews the faculty member's performance, prepares summary reports, and makes a recommendation to the executive committee. The executive committee is dependent on the tenure committee to provide information. The executive committee carefully considers all of the data compiled by the tenure committee before making its own recommendations.

Promotion

The investigators asked executive committee members to describe the process of promotion for tenured faculty. The data revealed that like the tenure process, the executive committee also varies considerably in the manner in which it conducts promotion decisions. The promotion process tends to be a function of disciplinary traditions, norms, and unique governance structure. The data about promotions in this study can be sorted into four categories: Substantive Control, Advisory to the Governing Faculty, Advisory to the Dean, and No Role. The categories in this dimension vary by the degree to which the executive committee participates and collaborates about promotion decisions.

Slightly more than half of the executive committees are classified as Substantive Control (see Table 1). Committees in this category typically receive recommendations

from a program chair or promotions committee about a promotion bid. These recommendations are considered by the executive committee before it makes its final promotion decision. One-third of the executive committees are classified as Advisory to the Dean. Committees in this category may receive recommendations from a promotions committee. The executive committee evaluates the faculty member's credentials and makes a recommendation. The dean considers the recommendation before deciding whether he or she will support the promotion bid.

Annual Merit Increase Decisions

The investigators asked executive committee members about their participation in decision-making regarding annual merit pay. About seven in ten faculty have no substantive role in the assignment of merit pay (see Table 1). The disbursement of merit pay is primarily the responsibility of the dean who may consult with the appropriate department or division chair. Approximately, one-quarter of the executive committees evaluate faculty performance and pass on their report to the dean. The dean allocates the merit pay based on the information from the executive committee and other sources. Only one executive committee has a substantive role in decisions about annual merit. The executive committee evaluates the faculty member's research, teaching, and service to determine the size of the merit increase.

Tenure Track Appointments

The approaches the executive committees take to tenure track appointments varies extensively among the campus units. Four types are used to describe the appointment process. Three-quarters of the executive committees are categorized as Substantive Control (see Table 1). Committees in this categories play a lead role in the

hiring process. The executive committee may coordinate the work of the appointment and search committees involved in the faculty search. In the end, the executive committee has substantial control over which candidate is extended an appointment offer. In some cases academic departments request faculty lines directly from the executive committee. More often though, departments negotiate with appointment committees or the dean about faculty lines. After all the data is collected, the executive committee is entrusted to make the final decision within the campus unit.

Relationship with Key Committees

This dimension was constructed to collect information about the relationship between the executive committee and other standing or substantial ad hoc committees. The primacy of the executive committees are delegated by the regental bylaws, nevertheless, the actual amount of control the executive committee welds over the other campus unit committees varies among the campus units. The amount of control exercised by the executive committees is divided into High, Medium, and Low. Approximately, two-thirds of the executive committee exhibit high levels of control over other internal committees (see Table 1). These executive committees established themselves as the most important decision-making body within the campus unit. All standing committees regularly report to the executive committee. The executive committee is very involved in setting policy in the campus unit which has systemic value.

Communication with Governing Faculty

The investigators asked executive committee members to describe how they communicate their activities to the governing faculty. The executive committees use a variety of communication techniques. These techniques vary from highly formal

systematic communications to informal conversations in the hallways and department meetings. Four categories are used to describe the campus unit communication patterns. No single dominant pattern emerged in the course of the study. One-third of the executive committees communicate using a Comprehensive Duplex style (see Table 1). These executive committees actively communicate with the governing faculty about important issues in a regular and systematic fashion. Communications with the governing faculty are both formal and informal. Formal communications may include e-mail, meeting minutes, summaries, and newsletters articles. Informal communications may include departmental and general faculty briefings. Another third of the executive committees are classified as Informal Communicator. These executive committees depend primarily upon informal lines of communication. Executive committee members regularly chat informally with members of the governing faculty. Communication occurs spontaneously and with little regard to protocol or a highly structured process.

Approximately one-quarter of the executive committees are classified as Formal Communicator. These executive committees depend primarily upon formal lines of communication between themselves and the faculty. Committee minutes are the primary source of information for the general faculty and staff. The minutes tend to be rudimentary reflections of executive committee activities and issues. Only one campus unit is classified as Limited Communicator. This executive committee is primarily concerned with promotion, tenure, and performance appraisal. Because these processes are confidential the executive committee rarely communicates with the governing faculty about their activities. Communication between the executive committee and the governing faculty is very limited.

CONCLUSION

The faculty authority among the campus units varies substantial. The governing faculty tend to receive only partial information about the election of representatives to the executive committee. Many executive committees play an active role in the creation of the meeting agenda and general planning, but they have marginal participation in budgetary decisions, curricular planning, and annual merit pay decisions. Executive committees tend to have considerable influence over tenure and promotion decisions. Furthermore, the executive committee tends to exercise authority over other committees within their campus units.

Steneck (1991) argues that faculty have limited opportunities to participate in major decisions and planning at the University. The current study found that about half of the executive committees have only a marginal role in curricular planning, however, half of the committees had high levels of general planning activity. It appears that many executive committees at the University plays an important role in the articulation of the campus unit mission, goals, policies, procedures, and positions. But standing curriculum committees appear to do much of the heavy lifting when comes to planning and managing the curriculum.

Keyek-Franssen and Ferguson (1996) examined the bylaws of the campus units to determine the distribution of power and authority among the governing faculty, the dean, and the executive committee. The authors argued that the nature of the authority relationships between these three groups were ambiguous. The investigators in the current study also support these conclusions about the tripartite division of authority. The dynamics of authority and power seems to come and go based on the issues, the

players, and the circumstances.

The dean appears to be the most powerful member of the executive committee. Even though the dean does not usually vote, she or he is the only one privy to the most complete governance picture. The dean is often the most knowledgeable about the budget, the issues, the personnel, and the predilection of central administration. The dean controls the introduction of agenda items and the time allotted for discussion. Furthermore, the executive committee typically cast formal votes on very few issues. Thus, only on rare occasions does the executive committee express its collective opinion in a manner that requires executive action. Nevertheless, the faculty executive committee has many characteristics that are associated with professional authority.

Faculty interest, to the extent that it is represented by the executive committee, are translated into policy by decision-making processes that coordinate and control curricular and campus planning, tenure, promotion, and tenure-track appointments. Although the executive committee may not have absolute control over these areas, faculty interest is nevertheless represented by faculty lead standing committees. The faculty maintain professional control by engaging in autonomous work, maintaining peer evaluation, and requiring the administration to recognize the outcomes of votes by the governing faculty regarding systemic change issues.

The power and authority vested in the executive committees appears to be uneven. Some executive committees play close attention to personnel issues, at the expense of strategic planning issues. Other committees are very active in most aspects of governance. Given that the Regent's Bylaws suggest that the executive committee should serve as a prominent policy making policy, many executive committees fall short

of these expectations. Executive committees at the University of Michigan provide faculty with the opportunity to participate in governance. These committees function in an uncertainty and problematic environment which is complicated by contradictory regental bylaws.

Since this report was issued the AAUP and SACUA have engaged in discussions to use the findings to spur dialogue among members of the academic community. The study findings have highlighted the diversity of governance structures and processes which exist at the University of Michigan. The scope and degree of faculty participation in governance issues varies among campus units. AAUP and SACUA are exploring various options to gather more information and change the institutional culture to encourage greater faculty participation in decision-making. The next round of discussions about the findings in this report will involve AAUP, SACUA, the provost, and other institutional governance committees.

This study highlights the usefulness of conducting institutional research about faculty governance. Institutional researchers can help university administrators and faculty governance leaders to understand the scope and intensity of faculty participation in the governance process by helping design and administer a study of governance. If shared governance is the goal of collaboration among faculty and administrators, we must begin with a better understanding of how important decisions are made within the colleges and schools of large universities.

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